

DNR Reports...

Probably the bird most often in the news this past year, especially on the Eastern Shore, is the Canada Goose. The main reason it has gotten so much media attention, like most everything else, is controversy. We are trying to reverse the declining Canada goose numbers in the State, primarily by adopting more restrictive hunting seasons. As a result of this, certain hunting guides and Eastern Shore businesses have objected and challenged our decisions. It even got political.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, our Canada Goose population peaked at about 600,000 birds. Our November surveys last year counted just 295,400 geese. This is more than a 40 percent decrease in less than a decade. Change in Canada Goose populations is controlled by 2 factors, namely annual survival and breeding success. Since we cannot control weather conditions on the breeding grounds (which is primarily on the Ungava Peninsula of Canada), we as wildlife managers have no choice but to work with survival.

Hunting is the main source of mortality to Canada Geese. Thus, if we control the number of geese killed each year by hunters we can improve survival. That is in fact what we are trying to do. A rule of thumb in goose management is that populations with adult survival of about 76 percent are stable. In 1987 (our most recent estimate) this rate was only 61 percent. This is not to say that hunting will eradicate geese, but it can change population levels as we have found.

Destiny of the Canada goose in Maryland is more in our hands than can be said elsewhere in the Atlantic flyway. "Short-stopping", which is the tendency of geese to winter farther north, has been suggested as a reason for our declines. An intensive study of geese banded with yellow neck collars, some of which you may have observed and reported, has proven otherwise. Approximately 90 percent of geese banded in Maryland after the hunting season and observed the following year were seen here and not in states farther north. This neck collar study is being continued to help us understand movements within Maryland. Please keep reporting your sightings. We need to know the neck collar number of each goose observed, plus where, when, and how many other geese were present.

Canada geese mean a lot to the Eastern Shore and Maryland, to both hunters and non-hunters alike. Probably more folks come to the Eastern Shore each year to just look at the geese, than do those who come to hunt. You are probably one yourself. We are managing the goose resource for all.

There is nothing better than to hear the honking of Canada geese in the fall. We are committed to keeping our geese here for generations to come. We appreciate your support.

Glenn Therres



THE MARYLAND YELLOWTHROAT

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1989

Maryland Ornithological Society

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting September 9, 1989

The MOS Board of Directors met at the Seneca Creek State Park, Montgomery County, on September 9, 1989. President John Malcolm called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

The minutes of the June 3, 1989 Board Meeting were approved as distributed.

Mr. Malcolm welcomed everyone to the meeting and encouraged the members to consider ways to making MOS better known.

Treasurer's Report. Emily Joyce, Treasurer, reported that the MOS had more expenses than income. She strongly encouraged everyone to remain within their budgets. Ms. Joyce also reported that the 1989 conference made a profit of approximately \$111.00. Ms. Joyce said that she is considering changing checking accounts to an institution with better rates. She also suggested that budget reports at board meetings be abbreviated and a detailed report be presented only at the conference. The board agreed to the suggestion.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit. Noreport

Budget. Mr. Malcolm introduced Norman Chamberlain, who replaced Charles Mason as Budget Chairperson. Mr. Chamberlain is preparing an amended budget for the fiscal year ending 1990. He requested proposed budgets from all the committees.

Conference. Chairperson Steve Hitchner announced that, at the next conference, in addition to birding field trips, non-birding trips will be scheduled, such as tours of historic Chestertown. There was also a discussion of whether to use the swim center at Washington College during the conference. At the previous conference at Washington College not many people used the pool, so it was deemed not worth the additional cost.

Conservation. Chairperson Rich Dolesh discussed:

1. Chesapeake Bay Nontidal Wetlands Protection Program. This is an ex-

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

Maryland Christmas Counts and Compilers 1989-90

December 16

Allegany County: John Willetts, Rt. 2, Box 640, Frostburg, MD 21532. 689-3202.

Catoctin Mountain (Frederick County): Mike Welch, 1832 Millstream Dr., Frederick, Md. 21701. 663-3037.

Denton: Steve Westre, RR1, Box 212G, Denton, MD 21629. 479-0338.

Washington, D.C.: John Bjerke, 7704 Camberford Place, Rockville, MD 20855. 301/963-8525.

December 17

Baltimore Harbor: Peter Webb, 7014 Lancaster Rd., Baltimore, MD 21207. 486-1217.

Bowie: Fred Fallon, 249-1518 and Woody Martin, (o) 498-0401.

Lower Kent: Jim Gruber, 201 Maple Ave., Chestertown, MD 21620. 778-6851.

Pt. Tobacco: George Wilmot, 401 Amherst Rd., Bryans Rd., MD 20616. 375-8552.

Salisbury: Charles Vaughn (see Crisfield).

Seneca: Gary Pendleton 330-9453 (w).

St. Michaels: Carolyn Mills, Box 93, St. Michaels, MD 21663. 745-5209.

December 23

Triadelphia Reservoir: Bob Whitcomb, 10610 Belfast Place, Potomac, MD 20854. 344-2339. (work); 299-5215 (home).

Washington County: Cam Lewis, 1908 Applewood Dr., Hagerstown, MD 21740. 791-2516.

December 26

Jug Bay: Bob and Pat Melville, 6401 Mallard Ln., Lothian, MD 20711. 627-8376.

S. Dorchester County (Blackwater NWR): Chan Robbins (see Ocean City).

December 27

Crisfield: Charles Vaughn, 1306 Frederick Ave., Salisbury, MD 21801. 742-7221.

December 28

Ocean City: Chan Robbins, 7902 Brooklyn Bridge Rd., Laurel, MD 20707. 725-1176.

December 29

Chincoteague, Va.: Fred Scott, 115 Kennondale Lane, Richmond, VA 23226. 804/282-2666.

December 30

Elkton: Joel Citron, 2003 Ferndale Dr., Wilmington, DE 19810. 302/475-8773; between 12/15-12/27 call Al Palmer, 302/478-4238.

Rock Run: Dennis Kirkwood, 265 Brandenbaugh Rd., Newark Farms, White Hall, MD 21161. 692-5905.

Sugarloaf Mt.: Gary Nelson, 10101 Grosvenor Place, #125, Rockville, MD 20852. 897-8916, Keith Van Ness, 80 Main St., Walkersville, MD 21793. 845-4450.

Pt. Lookout: Ann Bishop, P.O. Box 178, St. Inigoes, MD 20684. 872-5355.

December 31

Annapolis: Hal Wierenga, 647-7439, Sue Ricciardi, 647-9513.

(Board News, Con't. from page 1, column 2)
tremely important issue because the wetlands are vanishing. Mr. Dolesh strongly recommended the MOS contact the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by September 11 to encourage a strong nontidal wetlands program.

2. Capital Crescent Trail in Montgomery County. According to Mr. Dolesh, this is a proposal to establish an 11 mile hiker-biker trail and or a light rail system from the Old Georgetown Branch to Silver Spring via Bethesda.
3. National Celebration of the Outdoors. Mr. Dolesh encouraged MOS's participation and involvement in this program. This is separate from the 20th Anniversary of Earth Day which will be celebrated April 23-29, 1990.
4. Fort Meade. Mr. Dolesh reported that Ft. Meade will be divided up and parts of it disposed of. It is not clear how it will be divided but there are several agencies interested in the land - Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Maryland Air National Guard, Medivac, NASA, and the Department of Defense.

Education. No report

Gifts. Mr. Malcolm stated that the chairmanship of this committee has been vacant since the committee's inception. He requested a volunteer. The Gifts Committee is an important committee particularly since the MOS is facing an increase in operating expenses and must seek ways to raise its income.

Investment. No report.

Library. No report.

Long Range Planning. No report.

Research. Karen Skuldt, Chairperson, reported on the papers presented at the 1989 conference. Five papers were presented, and were well-received. The committee is interested in arranging another session at the next conference. The board members agreed that such a session is a good idea; a "papers" session offers a nice alternative for some people to afternoon field trips.

Scholarship. Chairperson Mildred Gebhard reported that the drive for candidates for next year will begin at the end of October, 1989. There is a dearth of persons interested in the ecology workshops. The scholarships are available to anyone 18 years old or older who can use the knowledge and be able to pass it on to others.

County List. Joy Aso reminded everyone to look for the county lists reporting form in the November/December issue of the *Maryland Yellowthroat*.

Mailing List. No report.

May Count. James Stasz, Chairperson, reported that 223 parties of 495 observers participated in the 1989 May Count. Of note: nine counties had a record high number of species, only 1 county had fewer than 100 species, and 45 species were found on every May Count list.

Nominations. Chairperson Melinda Byrd requested ideas and names for potential members of committees and for potential candidates for next year. Mr. Malcolm requested the Nominations Committee's assistance in filling some of the vacancies on the board.

Publications. Chandler Robbins, Chairperson, reported that the March 1989 issue of the *Maryland Birdlife* would be mailed the week of September 11 by the Howard County Chapter. The June issue is scheduled to go to print that same week. Chapter reports were received for all chapters except Baltimore and Alleghany. Only the Records and Sanctuary Committees submitted reports; others should submit reports as soon as possible.

Mr. Robbins commended Robert Ringler for his outstanding job of summarizing the bird sightings and preparing the reports. He also thanked Mariana Nuttle (Caroline County Chapter) and John Lorenz (Kent County Chapter) for submitting their chapter reports in the desired format. He reminded everyone that reports and manuscripts be double spaced; he referred to the June 1988 issue of *Birdlife* for more information.

At present the Committee's biggest activity is planning the publication of the Atlas.

The September/October issue of the *Maryland Yellowthroat* is at the printer and will be sent out soon.

Records. Eirik Blom is acting secretary in the absence of Erika Wilson. Rare bird reports should be sent to Mr. Blom.

Atlas. Mr. Cullom reported that the field work is complete, 95% of the data entry is complete, and 35 pieces of art work are complete.

There are two potential publishers of the Atlas, Kendal-Hunt Publishing Company and the University of Pittsburgh Press. Neither require "up-front money." The committee will explore the question of who would retain ownership of the copyright.

The committee has \$17,000, and monthly expenses of approximately \$1,600. Research continues on obtaining additional funding, including applying for grants. Several other suggestions were offered to raise the necessary funds including selling pre-publication copies of the Atlas, and inserting a donor's page to recognize major contributors.

Sanctuary. Chairperson Dotty Mumford reported that an issue paper regarding the tum Suden Sanctuary was mailed to the board members prior to the meeting. She also received a letter from the Superintendent of Schools, Harford County, who assured the MOS that if tum Suden was given to the Harford Glen nature complex, it would be welcomed as an extension of the facility.

The potential sale of tum Suden is no longer an issue because neither potential Atlas publisher requires funds in

advance. Ms. Mumford was thanked for her fine work. The board members present agreed to accept the report and take no action.

A 50-acre woodlot in Talbot County was offered to the MOS. The donors would like the land to remain as it is, with no development. The Talbot County Chapter wants to accept the land. The board empowered Ms. Mumford to explore the offer and accept it if she deems it appropriate, and to arrange a survey of the property lines if necessary.

A work day is scheduled for September 23rd at the Mill Creek Sanctuary to relocate some trails. Another work day is scheduled for November 4th at Irish Grove. Everyone is encouraged to attend one or both work days.

OTHER OLD BUSINESS

MOS license plates: The effort is proceeding. Mr. Dolesh asked if anyone knew the location of the Federal Tax Exemption Certificate, which is needed to process the request.

Joy Wheeler reminded the members that the MOS has assumed responsibility for the Junior Nature Camp. She requested a volunteer to manage the camp for 1990, scheduled for the third weekend in June. An announcement will be made in the *Maryland Yellowthroat*.

NEW BUSINESS

William McIntosh, the President of the Harford County Chapter, announced that the Harford County Telephone Hotline is in operation at 638-0290. To submit reports call 838-4427.

Robert Ringler will lead the listers trip October 7-9, 1989. Anyone interested should meet at 9:00 a.m., October 7, at Bombay Hook. Charles Vaughn, Wicomico County Chapter, requested that he be notified of any unusual birds sighted in Wicomico County.

Joy Aso reported that the DNR has calendars available for MOS to sell to raise money. The calendars retail for \$3.50; the MOS would keep \$1.75 for each calendar the MOS sells. The unsold calendars may be returned to DNR. The board members agreed that it would be a good fund-raiser and voted that of the \$1.75 profit for MOS the chapters could keep \$0.75, and \$1.00 would go to the operating fund. Joy Aso volunteered to handle the calendar sales for the MOS.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Aso
Acting Secretary

Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc. Officers

Executive Council

President: John Malcolm	977-5788
Vice President: Richard J. Dolesh	627-2270 (Day)
Treasurer: Emily D. Joyce	923-6053
Secretary: Patricia J. Moore	253-2796
Exec. Secretary: Joy Aso.	554-8529
Past President: Robert Ringler	549-6031

Standing Committees

Audit: Rodney Jones	486-3442
Budget: Norman Chamberlain	662-8083
Bylaws: Lee Meinersmann	875-5058
Conference: Stephen Hitchner	778-3560
Gary Nelson	897-8916
Conservation: Richard J. Dolesh	627-2270 (Day)
Eagle: Keith Van Ness	972-7446
Education: James Cheevers	224-2061
Gifts: (Vacant)	
Investments: John Barber	945-3232
Library: Joy Wheeler	825-1204
Long-Range Planning: Joanne Solem	725-5037
Research: Karen Skuldt	788-6079
Sanctuary: Dorothy Mumford	849-8336
Scholarship: Mildred E. Gebhard	939-0161

Other Committees and Projects

Atlas: John Cullom	747-5870
Co-ordinator: Eirik A. Blom	879-9667
Cavity Nesting: Chuck Dupree	796-1086
County List Co-ordinator: Harvey Mudd	530-7322
Mailing Lists: William L. Murphy	474-1880
May County Co-ordinator: James Stasz	257-9540
Nominating: Melinda Byrd	549-1697
Publications: Chandler S. Robbins	498-0281
Mark Hoffman	647-7227
Records: Eirik A. Blom (Acting)	879-9667

Chapter Presidents

Allegany: Roy Brown, Jr.	724-7769
Anne Arundel: Sue Ricciardi	647-9513
Baltimore County: William Newman	442-5639
Caroline County: Mariana Nuttle	479-2644
Carroll County: Melinda Byrd	549-1697
Frederick County: Stauffer Miller	473-4168
Harford County: William B. McIntosh	734-6517
Howard County: Thomas Strikwerda	942-2841
Jug Bay: Wally Stephens	423-8230
Kent County: John Lorenz	928-3291
Montgomery County: John Bjerke	963-8525
Patuxent Chapter: Chandler S. Robbins	725-1176
Talbot County: Carolyn Mills	745-5209
Washington County: Cameron & Norma Lewis	791-2516
Wicomico County: Gail Vaughn	742-7221

The 1990 MOS Conference Pin Contest

This is a reminder to submit your entries for the 1990 MOS Conference Pin contest. The rules are simple:

Use a bird appropriate to the conference site (Kent County), and include the phrases "MOS" and "1990." Submissions should be on sturdy, white, unlined paper or Bristol; in any medium; and at least five inches across (but not larger than 9 x 12). Be sure the designs are clearly depicted, and that you indicate the colors. Any shape pin is OK. Fine details and complicated designs will be lost or blurred when reduced to a 1½ inch pin. Bold, simple designs work best.

Entries are due by December 31, 1989. Send them to John Malcolm, 10205 Kindly Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20879. Call John with any questions (301) 977-5788, or write to him if you want more information.

Mini-Lecture

Anting

A very unusual and puzzling instinctive activity in birds has been described by ornithologists as anting. Anting appears to be a stereotyped behavior pattern in which a bird treats its feathers with ants or other material. Anting has been categorized into two forms. Passive anting, as practiced by crows, has the bird spread its wings, ruffle its feathers, and sit on an active ant hill and allows the angry ants to crawl through its feathers. Active anting, seen in orioles, jays, and starlings, has the bird crush an ant in its beaks and anoint the underside of wing tips, the undertail coverts, and the base of the tail feathers. The ants may be eaten or discarded after the activity is finished.

While it is still not understood why the birds perform this behavior, certain facts are known. The 200 species of birds that perform this activity usually use ants that emit chemicals, especially formic acid, as opposed to stinging ants. Substitute materials such as vinegar, mothballs, and citrus fruits have been used during anting. All of these substitute materials produce a burning sensation when exposed to animal skin. Some researchers feel that ant fluid may act as a medicinal tonic for the skin, protect feathers, or produce a pleasurable effect on the bird. While this behavior may be the result of a unique feeding pattern, the most logical explanation appears to be that the ants act as a delouser, either eating the bird's external parasites or having the ant's chemical secretions kill the parasites on the bird.

Individual birds must discover the anting behavior on their own, so it is possible for some members of a species to ant regularly while others seldom do. Typical anting behavior lasts 45 minutes and is followed by preening and bathing.

Joseph M. Lewandowski

The AOU Supplement: Splits But No Lumps

In the July 1989 issue of *The Auk* (106:532-538) the American Ornithologists Union's (AOU) Committee on Classification and Nomenclature published the thirty-seventh supplement to AOU Check-list of North American Birds. In simple, birdwatching terms, the latest round of lumps, splits, and name changes. A review of their actions reveals the following changes of interest to birdwatchers.

First, the splits. These are birds that have been previously treated as one species, and as the result of investigation have been split into two species. The AOU now covers all of Central America as well as North America, and I will ignore changes in birds whose ranges do not extend north of Mexico.

1. Western Flycatcher *Empidonax difficilis*. Believe it or not, we have another *Empidonax* flycatcher! This action is the result of a long and comprehensive series of studies, establishing that coastal and interior birds, though overlapping at some points, do not interbreed. Field identification of these two birds is still in its infancy, and to be certain you have seen them both requires having visiting their breeding ranges.

The two new species are known as (brace yourself) Pacific-slope Flycatcher (*E. difficilis*) and Cordilleran Flycatcher (*E. occidentalis*). The name Western Flycatcher is reserved for birds that cannot be identified to species. The Pacific-slope Flycatcher breeds from southeastern Alaska and northwestern British Columbia south of southwestern California and in Baja California. It is found almost exclusively (in the breeding season) west of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountains. The Cordilleran Flycatcher breeds in the interior of the West. It can be found east of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountains from southern Canada and eastern Washington south through Arizona and Texas and into Mexico. Another subspecies, resident on the Channel Islands off California may also be a separate species, and if studies prove it is, will be called Channel Island Flycatcher (*E. insularis*).

2. Black-tailed Gnatcatcher *Polipotila melanura*. This split has been anticipated for some time, and follows the publication of Jonathan Atwood's monograph. What has happened is that the birds from coastal California have been split out, and are now known as California Gnatcatcher (*P. californica*). They are resident in southwestern California and south through Baja California. The rest of the population retains the name Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and the same Latin name as before.

3. Brown Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*). Another split that birdwatchers in the West have anticipated for a long time. What has happened is that the coastal population has

been split from the interior birds on the basis of differences in vocalizations, plumages, and genetic structure. The two populations are now known as California Towhee (*P. crissalis*) and Canyon Towhee (*P. fuscus*). Brown Towhee is reserved for unidentified birds or for referring to both species.

California Towhees are resident west of the Sierra Nevada from southern Oregon through California and Baja California. Canyon Towhees are resident from Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas through Mexico. The two populations do not come into contact, and are non migratory. If you have seen "Brown" Towhees in California and anywhere east of there, you have seen them both.

Those are the major splits. Now for the major lumps, or the merging of two former species into a single one. Good news, there aren't any. The AOU appears to be in a period of splitting, much of it due to the influence of the new electrophoretic techniques. As we will see in a bit, quite a few additional potential splits are being investigated.

First, there are some other small changes to be mentioned. This is a good chance to update your field guide.

The Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* is now known as the American Pipit *A. rubescens*. This is the result of splitting it out from the Old World Water Pipit.

The Latin name of the Northern Gannet has been changed from *Sula bassanus* to *Morus bassanus*. This move reflects the feeling that they are not as closely related to the Boobies as previously thought.

The Latin name of the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron has been changed from *Nycticorax violaceus* to *Nyctanassa violacea* establishing some distance between it and the other Night-Herons of the world.

Change the name of Common Barn-Owl to Barn Owl. Change the name of Northern Hawk-Owl to Northern Hawk Owl (remove the hyphen!). Change the name of Common Parakeet to Parakeet.

That covers the changes affecting birdwatchers in North America. People interested in the many changes in the status of Central American birds will have to track down a copy of the supplement. Before we settle in for the next two years (the supplement is published in the July issue of *The Auk* in odd-numbered years) its fun to look briefly at the birds the committee has under investigation. While not every one of these is guaranteed to end up in a split, the odds are very good that the majority of them will.

The committee is presently studying possible splits in Manx Shearwater, Blue Grouse, Rough-winged and Cave Swallows, Gray Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Seaside Sparrow, Red Crossbill, and (at last, at last!) Northern Oriole. In addition they are considering the possibility of lumping Iceland and Thayer's Gulls as well as American and Caribbean Coots,

two changes that would solve a lot of field identification problems. They have had the problem of Common and Hoary Redpolls under scrutiny for some time and have announced that they will not be lumping them.

The other subject they are tackling is Cox's Sandpiper. The question for the AOU is whether or not to assign the bird specific status or not. While it is impossible to perfectly anticipate what action they will take, it is worth noting that no less an authority than John Cox, for whom the "species" was named, has published several articles recently arguing that the bird is best treated as a hybrid. I would guess that there is little chance it will be awarded full species status until and if a known breeding range is discovered.

So there we have the latest round of changes. In July of 1991 there will be another bunch, and for the time being, it looks like we will continue to get many more splits than lumps. The message is: Pay attention to those recognizable subspecies.

Eirik A. T. Blom

Notice to Chapter Program Chairmen

Many times, I have had MOS members remark to me that the feature of the *Yellowthroat* they found most useful was the Calendar of Events. Instead of being limited to local chapter activities, the more adventurous birder is able to sample field trips sponsored by other chapters to points throughout the state. Hence, it is the goal of the *Yellowthroat* editorial team to include a complete schedule of activities from each and every MOS chapter. However, this is only possible with the help of Chapter Program Chairmen.

The number of MOS Chapters does not allow us to contact each Chapter when schedules are not sent in on time. The deadlines for submittal of material is published in each issue for the next issue, and if these dates are not met, then we have no choice but to go to press lacking a chapter's input. We don't like this, but the onus to contribute is on the Chapter, and we can not chase down people and beg them for contributions. Chapter Presidents have been sent a schedule of the publication dates for the newsletter, which have been consistent for the past several years. Other than the September/October issue, with its deadline when chapters are still in their summer lull, activities should be scheduled in plenty of time for *Yellowthroat* publication.

Many thanks to the majority of Chapters that get their schedules in on time and for those that don't, I hope this provides some incentive. Remember activity lists are not sent to me, but to the Calendar Coordinator.

The Editor

Winter Bird Survey Two Year Summary

Two years of a planned six-year study of wintering birdlife in Maryland have now been completed. Begun in 1988, the Winter Bird Survey is designed so that winter range and relative abundance maps may be prepared for Maryland's wintertime diurnal bird population. Subsequently it will be possible to monitor population trends and cycles and irrump-tions of northern species.

Using Atlas blocks as the survey unit, field-experienced birders have been walking a four-hour route from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. between January 10 and February 10, covering habitat proportional to that present in the block. Numbers of species and individuals are recorded by the half-hour. By the Survey's end, half (600) of the Atlas blocks in the state will have been covered, in an every-other-block pattern.

So far, 183 blocks have been surveyed by over fifty volunteer birders. Southern tier blocks in the USGS quadrangles were emphasized the first year, central blocks in 1989, and northern tier blocks are up for this winter. An attempt to survey the same blocks, but during the traditional Christmas county period, for comparison purposes did not draw enough volunteers; a decision on whether to try this again has not yet been made. A summary of data from the first two years appears below.

If you are an experienced birder, able to identify winter birds by sight and call, and would like to participate, please notify me as soon as possible. Remember, winter birding beats the mosquitoes, chiggers and ticks of summer, and you might see one of those rare birds cited below!

Results

Total number of blocks
survey in 2 years: 183
Total number of species observed during
count time: 127 (130 in all)
Mean number of species per block: 33.9;
Range: 10-55

Species Appearing in Most Number of Blocks

	# Of Blocks	%
American Crow	182	(99.5%)
Downy Woodpecker	179	(97.8%)
Northern Cardinal	177	(96.7%)
Tufted Titmouse	175	(95.6%)
Dark-eyed Junco	172	(94.0%)
Red-bellied Woodpecker	171	(93.4%)
Blue Jay	170	(92.9%)
White-throated Sparrow	169	(92.3%)
Carolina Wren	167	(91.2%)
Song Sparrow	167	(91.2%)
Carolina Chickadee	165	(90.2%)
European Starling	164	(89.6%)

Ranking by Number of Individuals

Common Grackle	65,462
Red-winged Blackbird	35,704

Canada Goose	34,261
European Starling	27,691
American Crow	10,272
House Sparrow	8,329
White-throated Sparrow	7,050
Ring-billed Gull	6,888
Snow Goose	6,326
Dark-eyed Junco	5,790
House Finch	5,460

Blocks Yielding Most Number of Species

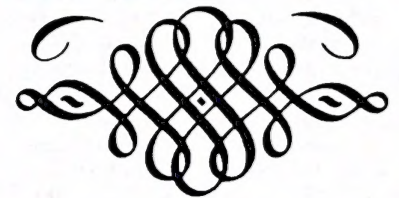
Quadrangle	Quad, Block Numbers	Number of Species
Ninepin	209, 4	55
Buckeystown	86, 4	52
Girdletree	233, 5	52
Cambridge	172, 5	51
Sterling	116, 4	50
Eden	206, 5	49
E. New Market	173, 5	48
Blackwater River	186, 3	48
Kingston	231, 5	47
Mardela Springs	188, 3	47
Point of Rocks	85, 4	46
Easton	149, 4	46

Other Observations: No Pine Siskins or Evening Grosbeaks were reported, which is consistent with other observations from the winter of 1989. Snow buntings were also nonexistent. Species showing large increases over the first year were Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Song Sparrow and Eastern Bluebird. However, since different blocks were surveyed each year, one must be cautious in inferring much from those results. The first Common Yellowthroat observed in the first two years turned up in an Annapolis block. While last year, Catbirds, Brown Thrashers and Eastern Phoebe were concentrated on the lower Eastern Shore, this year those species were much more spread out. Other rarities sighted were: A Great Egret in a block in northern Anne Arundel County, a Northern Saw-Whet Owl in western Montgomery County, an Orange-crowned Warbler near Ellicott City, and a Ross's Goose or indeterminate hybrid, a Marsh Wren, eight Palm Warblers, an Indigo Bunting, a Chipping Sparrow and a Lapland Longspur, all on the lower Eastern Shore.

Thanks to the following observers in 1989: Ted Banvard, Polly Batchelder, Chris Beaton, Danny Bystrak, Jim Cheevers, Les Coble, Lynn Davidson, Alan Dixon, Bob Dixon, Kevin Dodge, Sam Droege, Les Eastman, Fred Fallon, Jane Farrell, Harold Fogleman, Mark Garland, Greg Gough, Alex Hammer, David Holmes, Marshall Howe, Emily Joyce, Hank Kaestner, Bob Keedy, Dennis Kirkwood, Gail Mackiernan, Harvey and Marion Mudd, Mike O'Brien, Paul O'Brien, Jan Reese,

Sue Ricciardi, Bob Ringler, Connie Skipper, Jo Solem, Jim Stasz, Charlie Swift, Bill Thompson, Kermit Updegrove, Brad Vaughn, Charlie Vaughn, June Vaughn, Dave Wallace, Pete Webb, Steve Westre, Jim Wilkinson, George Wilmot, and Erica Wilson.

Sue A. Ricciardi, 1132 Ferber Avenue, Arnold, Maryland 647-9513.



Maryland Screech Owls Red or Gray?

Most birdwatchers know that Eastern Screech-Owls come in two color morphs, red and gray. It is also generally understood that red morphs are more common in the south, and gray morphs predominate in the north. If you look at the map of the range of Eastern Screech-Owl it becomes immediately apparent that Maryland is just about in the middle of the range.

So, we should have red and gray birds about evenly divided, right? Well, maybe. It might even work out that way, though no one knows for sure. It is not known yet if the shift from red to gray is an even, gradual one, or if it is sudden, or irregular. Maryland is a good place to start the investigation.

For example, is there any difference in the relative abundance of the morphs between Garrett County and the southern Eastern Shore? Might the differences be not only latitudinal, but altitudinal as well? The differences might be measurable, if subtle.

The only way to tackle this problem is to see Screech-Owls. Banders catch some, but most are seen, either at night in a flash-light, or found roosting during the day. Even using a tape recorder it might take one person a long time to collect enough data to answer the question, but if someone collected reports from all the bird-watchers in the state it would be much easier.

Rick Blom

MOS Calendar December 1989/January 1990

Friday, December 1

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "Birds of Jamaica," by David W. Holmes. Hosts/Hostesses: Phil & Barbara Davis, Henry and Betty Jane Boudreau. 8 p.m. at the Anne Arundel County Public Library, 1410 West Street in Annapolis.

Saturday, December 2

FIELD TRIP. Washington. A workshop in the field for counting winter resident birds. Meet 8:00 a.m. at the Park & Ride at MD Rt. 65 and I-70, next to McDonalds. Contacts are Cam & Norma Lewis, 791-2516.

FIELD TRIP. Wicomico. Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co. Eddie and Chris Slaughter, 548-1319.

Sunday, December 3

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co. Good for waterfowl and bald eagles. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Annapolis Mall Park & Ride lot, bring lunch. The leader is Chris Beaton, 849-8451.

Thursday, December 7

MEETING. Frederick. "Activities and Toxicologic Work at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center," by Holiday Obrecht. Annual Christmas Dinner at Araby Church, south of Frederick.

Saturday, December 9

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Smithsonian Chesapeake Bay Center For Environmental Studies, Anne Arundel Co. Waterfowl and winter residents followed by hot soup at the Taylors'. Meet at 12 noon at the Annapolis Mall Park & Ride lot, 1/2 day. The coordinator is Laddie Flyger, 647-4854.

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Loch Raven Reservoir. Wintering waterfowl are in abundance at this Baltimore County hotspot. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Rt. 152/I-95 Park & Ride. The organizer is Pam Rhoads, 676-8946.

FIELD TRIP. Washington. Dam #4, C & O Canal NP. Looking for winter residents and perhaps waterbirds. Meet 7:30 a.m. at the Park & Ride at MD Rt. 65 & I-70, next to McDonalds. The leader is Harold Winter, 797-5657.

Wednesday, December 13

MEETING. Carroll. "Birding Adventures in Trinidad & Tobago," by Bill Murphy. 7:30 p.m. at Piney Run Nature Center, 30 Martz Rd., Sykesville.

Thursday, December 14

MEETING. Howard. Program TBA. 7:30 p.m. at Longfellow Elementary School, Columbia.

December 16-December 31

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS. Statewide. See elsewhere in this issue.

Thursday, January 4

MEETING. Frederick. "Efforts to Save the California Condor," by John Haley. 7:30 p.m. Music Room of Frederick High School, Frederick, MD.

Friday, January 5

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "Backyard Wildlife," by Edith Thompson. Hosts/Hostesses: Chris Beaton, Alan & Arlene Howard. 8 p.m. at the

Anne Arundel County Public Library, 1410 West Street in Annapolis.

Sunday, January 7

FIELD TRIP. Carroll. Hike at Erma Gebb's farm to view Red-headed Woodpeckers and more on this 350-acre farm. Meet 8:30 a.m. Call for directions at 549-1697 or 876-2768.

Thursday, January 11

MEETING. Howard. Program TBA. 7:30 p.m. at Longfellow Elementary School, Columbia.

Saturday, January 13

FIELD TRIP. Frederick. New Design Road. A chance to see wintering Horned Larks and possible Larkspur or Snow Bunting. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Culler Lake Boat House, W. Second St., Frederick.

FIELD TRIP. Talbot. An evening at Bombay Hook NWR with Don Merritt. Details to follow in the newsletter.

FIELD TRIP. Washington. Open country birding. Meet 8 a.m. at Richardson's Restaurant on Dual Highway for breakfast, followed by a drive in search of Horned Larks and other winter birds of the fields. The leader is Harold Winger, 797-5657.

Sunday, January 14

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Conowingo Dam, Harford Co. Good for winter gulls and waterfowl. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Annapolis Mall Park & Ride lot, bring lunch. The leader is Sue Ricciardi, 647-9513.

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Conowingo Dam. If you like gulls you'll love this field trip. Many rare gulls are sighted here each winter at the dam, along with bald eagles. Dress warmly and bring your scope. Meet at 8 a.m. at Fisherman's Park. The organizer is John Wortman, 939-5732.

Wednesday, January 17

MEETING. Allegany. "The Annual Cycle of Waterfowl," by Dr. Frank Rohwer, Avian Ecologist, Appalachian Environmental Laboratory. 7 p.m. at the Allegany Co. Dept. of Health Community Room.

Monday, January 22

MEETING. Wicomico. Bird Trivia.

Tuesday, January 23

MEETING. Washington. Charles Brightbill will talk about the owls of local habitats. 7:30 p.m. at Funkstown Elementary School, Funkstown School Rd.

Saturday, January 27

MID-WINTER COUNT. Harford. Harford Countains should contact Bill Pfingsten, 838-5732, and Cecil Countains should contact Marv Kastama, 378-3063.

FIELD TRIP. Wicomico Deal Island, all day. Polly Batchelder (651-0982) and Betty Pitney (543-1853).

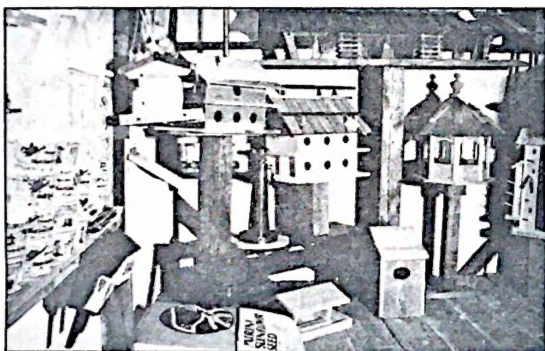
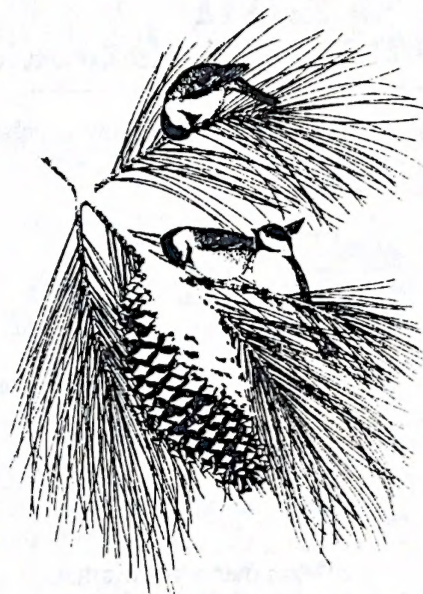
Sunday, January 28

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Annapolis Neck, Anne Arundel Co. Waterfowl & winter residents from Hillsmere to Bay Ridge followed by hot soup at the Ford's Meet at Bay Ridge Shopping Center parking lot at 12 noon. The leaders are John & Helen Ford, 267-8417.

Classifieds

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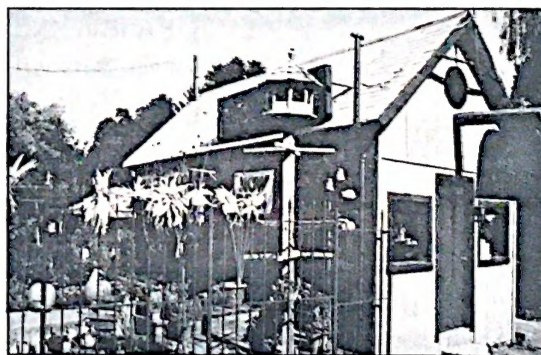
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